



**VMS LTD.
VANUATU**

UPDATE

2 / 02

April / June 2002

This Update is intended to keep our friends informed about what's new at VMSL and in Vanuatu.

STCW 1995 DOCUMENTATION -- UPDATE

Our last **UPDATE** included the following statement: *There will be no extensions to the 31 January 2002 deadline!* Even with the International Maritime Organization's circular recommending that Port States relax their enforcement of STCW 95 until mid-year, the Vanuatu Maritime Act mandates that officers on Vanuatu vessels have valid, i.e., 1995 STCW compliant Vanuatu documents.

In the first quarter, VMSL staff processed more than twice the number of applications usually processed in an average quarter. Even with five additional staff temporarily assisting in the seafarer documentation section, processing time now takes from three to five weeks, if the applications are complete. Applications will be processed in the order that they are received and, if they are found to be incomplete, they will be rejected. Certificates of completion for basic safety courses and other required training courses, such as for fast rescue craft, advanced fire fighting, etc., and updated medical examination forms, must accompany all applications.

LETTERS OF UNDERTAKING -- UPDATE

Sixty-one Letters of Undertaking have now been agreed to out of 102 sent out. Some administrations just do not respond to our numerous requests and their lack of response could affect Vanuatu's ability to recognize some seafarer documents.

SECURITY -- NO JOKING MATTER

During the last quarter, we were notified by the owners of an offshore supply vessel that they had removed a crew member due to his written anti-American / pro-terrorist comments. The individual was detained for questioning by Immigration agents, and the FBI, and eventually repatriated. This individual is now banned from working for the owners, banned from working on any Vanuatu vessels, and banned from the US. Although it appeared the comments were made as a joke, no one took it as such.

CMA SHIPPING 2002 CONFERENCE AND SEA JAPAN

Five VMSL staff members took time out from processing seafarer applications to spend some time at Vanuatu's booth at the CMA Conference & Exhibit. It gave them the opportunity to put faces to names and meet owners, class society representatives and others in the maritime industry, including our friendly competitors. As this goes to press Clive Grainger, Akemi Ebata, and Robert Bohn are attending SEA JAPAN in Tokyo.

BANKERS ASSOCIATION OF VANUATU INTRODUCES CODE OF CONDUCT

The BAV has issued a code in both English and French which consolidates the best practices followed by the five members of the Bankers Association (consisting of five banks, including European Bank Limited) which hold local

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UPDATE

3 / 02

July / Sept 2002

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WORRISOME STATISTICS

I am worried about the number of "natural cause" deaths reported during in 2002 to date: six deaths were from heart attacks; one from encephalitis; and, tragically, there was one suicide. This is four times the highest rate ever seen in the fleet. Can the heart attacks and suicide be attributed to higher stress levels brought on by fatigue? ISM? STCW? What? Are owners' medical screening examinations of vessel personnel stringent enough? I raise this last question since two heart attack victims had histories of serious heart conditions, were on medication, and yet were passed "fit for duty." If medical examiners fail to find existing problems, serious consequences could result in, at worst, disabling injuries, illnesses or deaths, or, at best, a person's inability to respond in an emergency situation. Some years ago a seafarer had to be repatriated and ultimately underwent open heart surgery at owner's expense when a pre-employment medical exam failed to detect problems.

HOW TO SURVIVE A HEART ATTACK WHILE ALONE

Considering the above, one may be able to survive a heart attack while alone if he/she knows "cough CPR". But fast action is a must. Without help, a person whose heart is beating properly and who begins to feel faint has only about 10 seconds left before losing consciousness. You can start "cough CPR" by coughing repeatedly and very vigorously. Take a deep breath before each cough and make each cough deep and prolonged.

A breath and a cough must be repeated every two seconds until help arrives, or until your heart is beating normally again. Deep breaths get oxygen into the lungs and coughing squeezes the heart to keep the blood circulating. The squeezing pressure on the heart also helps it regain normal rhythm. If help does not arrive, this may allow you time to seek help or if ashore get to a hospital. Does it work? We haven't seen any statistics on it, but if you are suffering a heart attack, it couldn't hurt. (Thanks to Marine Transport Corporation's *MTL Pulse* for permission to print this.)

NEW PERSONNEL AND SAD GOODBYES

We want to welcome Mr. Shane Strait who joined VMSL as an accountant in early July and to welcome Ms. Emily Sporn, Manager of Special Projects, who will join VMSL on October 1, 2002. We also want to wish Mrs. Denise Crescione a happy and well deserved retirement. Denise has been with the registry since 1990 and was instrumental in establishing a number of its successful programs. She and her husband have their eyes on Florida real estate near Disney World with spare rooms ready for their grandchildren.

COMPREHENSIVE REFORM PROGRAM

The country's Comprehensive Reform Program is pushing ahead, but is meeting with increasing criticism as the public sees the economic pain it is causing rather than the benefits. The Chinese government has given a further contribution to Vanuatu to assist with the implementation of the CRP and to help ease the transition. The program has been going for over four years, but in many sectors, progress has been patchy.

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